

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 SAJ-01 CU-04 CIAE-00

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8681

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 11347

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH

SUBJ: PEKING AND THE OVERSEAS CHINESE

SUMMARY: PEKING IS NOW PURSUING A GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE AP-
APPROACH TOWARD OVERSEAS CHINESE. IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN IT IS AT-
TEMPTING TO DOWNPLAY TIES AND IS OPENLY ENCOURAGING INTEGRATION
WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION IN AN ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THIS ISSUE AS
A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH ASEAN COUN-
TRIES. WITH OVERSEAS CHINESE LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES,
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CANADA, AND JAPAN, THE PRC IS PURSUING AN ACTIVE POLICY OF PRO-

MOTING CONTACTS TO STRENGTHEN PRC INFLUENCE THERE, UNDERCUT NATIONALIST EFFORTS, AND BUILD BRIDGES TO WESTERN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY. END SUMMARY.

1. SOUTHEAST ASIA: PEKING NOW REGARDS THE OVERSEAS CHINESE LIVING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA PRIMARILY AS A NEGATIVE FACTOR INHIBITING ITS EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH AND IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGION. OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS THE PRC HAS SOUGHT TO ALLAY THE SUSPICIONS OF THESE GOVERNMENTS CREATED BY TRADITIONAL CHINESE POLICY, ITS OWN AMBIVALENT POLICY OF EARLIER YEARS, AND ESPECIALLY THE LEFTIST CHAUVINIST LINE FOLLOWED IN THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION PERIOD. AS STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION, PEKING HAS ABOLISHED THE ONCE POWERFUL OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMISSION, TURNING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OVERSEAS CHINESE AFFAIRS OVER TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, ELIMINATED MOST OF THE PRIVILEGES FORMERLY ENJOYED BY RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE

TO THE PRC, AND STOPPED SOLICITING PRIVATE INVESTMENT FROM WEALTHY CHINESE BUSINESSMEN IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. MORE IMPORTANTLY, PRC LEADERS HAVE PUBLICLY URGED THE OVERSEAS CHINESE TO LIVE IN FRIENDSHIP WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION, TO LEARN FROM THEM, AND TO ABIDE BY LOCAL LAWS. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, CHOU EN-LAI HAS EMPHASIZED THAT THE OVERSEAS CHINESE SHOULD LEARN FROM THE LOCAL LANGUAGE AND INTERMARRY WITH THE LOCAL POPULATION. PUBLICLY DURING AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S VISIT EARLY THIS MONTH, CHOU PRAISED OVERSEAS CHINESE WHO CONTRIBUTE TO AND TAKE OUT THE CITIZENSHIP OF THE COUNTRY WHERE THEY RESIDE. FURTHERMORE, WHILE PEKING HAS NOT ENTIRELY ABANDONED ITS CLAIM OF SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO THOSE WHO HAVE NOT TAKEN OUT LOCAL CITIZENSHIP--AND PRC REPRESENTATIVES REMAIN IN COMPETITION WITH NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS IN SOME COUNTRIES FOR THEIR AFFECTION--IT HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE PRC WILL NOT INTERVENE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ON THEIR BEHALF EXCEPT IN EXTREME INSTANCES. FOR EXAMPLE, FOLLOWING THE AUGUST ANTI-CHINESE RIOT IN BANDUNG, INDONESIA, NCNA ISSUED ONLY ONE LATE REPORT WHICH DID NOT CRITICIZE THE Indonesian GOVT NOR SUGGEST THAT THE PRC HAD ANY RIGHT TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE HAPLESS CHINESE.

2. IN CURRENT MANEUVERING TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, THE
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ASEAN COUNTRIES NOT SURPRISINGLY ARE DEMANDING MORE THAN PROTESTATIONS OF GOOD INTENTIONS FROM PEKING ON THE OVERSEAS CHINESE ISSUE. INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE PHILIPPINES ALL HAVE SIZEABLE OVERSEAS CHINESE POPULATIONS WHICH DO NOT HAVE LOCAL CITIZENSHIP, AND DISPUTES ON THE STATUS OF THIS GROUP HAVE BEEN THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO EARLY CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT ON DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN KUALA LUMPUR AND PEKING. THE SUBJECT APPARENTLY AROSE AGAIN DURING DISCUSSIONS HELD AT THE UN BETWEEN REPRESENTA-

TIVES OF SEVERAL ASEAN COUNTRIES AND PRC UN DELEGATION CHIEF CHIAO KUAN-HUA. LAST WEEK, CHOU HAD DECIDED TO TAKE SEVERAL MORE STEPS IN THE HOPE OF ACHIEVING A BREAKTHROUGH IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ASEAN COUNTRIES. CHOU SAID THE PRC INTENDS TO (1) ISSUE A GOVERNMENT STATEMENT OPPOSING DUAL NATIONALITY, (2) SIGN AGREEMENTS ON THE NATIONALITY OF OVERSEAS CHINESE WITH FRIENDLY COUNTRIES SUCH AS CAMBODIA AND NORTH VIETNAM, AND (3) PROMULGATE A LAW STATING THAT CHINESE WHO TAKE THE NATIONALITY OF ANOTHER COUNTRY LATER HAVE NO CLAIM TO PRC NATIONALITY.

3. A NEW ELEMENT IS THE PRC CONCERN THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS MOVING TO EXPLOIT THE OVERSEAS CHINESE ISSUE TO DELAY NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE PRC AND THE GOVERNMENTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. SOVIET DIPLOMATS AND PROPAGANDISTS ARE CURRENTLY WARNING OF A SERIOUS BOOST TO CHAUVINISM IF PEKING IS ALLOWED TO SET UP EMBASSIES IN SEA COUNTRIES. PEKING IS ATTEMPTING TO COUNTER THESE TACTICS AND HAS WARNED OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN SEA TO BE ON GUARD AGAINST SOVIET MACHINATIONS.

4. UNITED STATES AND CANADA: IN CONTRAST TO THE APPROACH IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE PRC HAS ADOPTED AN EXTREMELY ACTIVE POLICY OF WOOLING OVERSEAS CHINESE AND PERSONS OF CHINESE ORIGIN IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA. PEKING CLEARLY HOPES TO GAIN THE GOODWILL OF THE CHINESE COMMUNITIES IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES, TO DEVELOP POSITIVE SUPPORT OF ITS POLICIES AND TO UNDERCUT THE CONTINUED STRONG POSITION OF THE CHINESE NATIONALISTS THERE. SEVERAL THOUSAND CHINESE-AMERICANS AND CANADIAN-AMERICANS HAVE VISITED THE PRC IN THE PAST TWO YEARS TO SEE RELATIVES AND TOUR CHINA. THEY HAVE BEEN GIVEN PREFERENCE IN THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS OVER THE LARGER NUMBER OF NON-CHINESE NORTH AMERICANS ALSO SEEKING TO VISIT THE PRC. THE EMBASSY IN OTTAWA AND THE LIAISON OFFICE IN WASHINGTON BOTH HAVE STAFFS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO DEALING WITH THE PEOPLE OF CHINESE DESCENT. THE

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PRC ALSO HAS ACTIVELY SOUGHT CANADIAN APPROVAL FOR A CONSULATE GENERAL IN VANCOUVER TO INCREASE ITS ACCESS TO THE CHINESE COMMUNITY ON THE WEST COAST.

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ACTION EA-14

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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5. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PRC APPARENTLY HOPES TO USE CHINESE-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS AND TECHNOLOGY. THESE SCIENTISTS COULD INTRODUCE THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE PRC TO THE WORLD SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY, PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF PRC SCIENCE, AND PERHAPS IN SOME INSTANCES, PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PROJECTS OR EVEN MOVE TO THE PRC. PEKING HAS GIVEN THE RED CARPET TREATMENT TO NUMEROUS LEADING CHINESE-AMERICAN SCIENTISTS--MOST NOTABLY NOBEL PRIZE WINNER YANG CHIEN-NING--AND ARRANGED EXTENSIVE TALKS FOR THEM WITH PRC LEADERS INCLUDING CHOU EN-LAI AND, IN YANG'S CASE, MAO TSE-TUNG. POLITICS, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, ARE KEPT AT A MINIMUM AS THESE VISITORS ARE TOLD OF THE PRC'S COMMITMENT TO BRING CHINESE SCIENCE UP TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND PATRIOTIC APPEALS ARE SUBTLE.

6. JAPAN. PEKING HAS ALSO ACTIVELY SOUGHT TO WOO THE OVERSEAS CHINESE COMMUNITY IN JAPAN, AND PARTICULARLY TO ENCOURAGE THE 50,000

STATELESS CHINESE THERE TO FORMALLY ADOPT PRC CITIZENSHIP. AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR EFFORTS IN JAPAN--AS INDEED IN THE UNITED STATES--IS TO IMPROVE CONTACTS WITH THE LARGE TAIWANESE COMMUNITY IN ORDER TO PROMOTE PROSPECTS FOR "PEACEFUL REUNIFICATION" OF TAIWAN. WEAKENING THE CONTINUING SUBSTANTIAL NATIONALIST INFLUENCE AMONG THE CHINESE COMMUNITY IS ALSO, OF COURSE, A MAJOR GOAL.

7. INTERNAL IMPLICATIONS:PRC OVERSEAS CHINESE POLICY DIRECTLY AFFECTS INTERNAL POLITICS AND STABILITY. THE PRE-CULTURAL REVOLUTION' POLICY HAD CREATED A CLASS OF PRIVILEGED RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE WITH THEIR OWN EXTENSIVE COMMISSARY SYSTEM, AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF REMITTANCES FROM ABROAD GAVE SPECIAL STATUS TO RELATIVES OF OVERSEAS CHINESE. RECENTLY, VISITORS TO CHINA HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE LEADERSHIP IS UNHAPPY WITH THE RETURNED OVERSEAS CHINESE AND THE RELATIVES OF OVERSEAS CHINESE BECAUSE OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROBLEMS THEY PRESENT. THE RECENT LIBERALIZATION OF EXIT PERMITS FOR THESE PEOPLE(HONG KONG 11148) AND PRC WILLINGNESS TO FACILITATE EMIGRATION TO CANADA AND AUSTRALIA PRESUMABLY REFLECT THE VIEW THAT THEY ARE MORE OF A LIABILITY THAN AN ASSET. IT ALSO SUGGESTS THAT THE PRC WILL NOT CONSIDER ANY ADDITIONAL LARGE-SCALE IMMIGRATION TO CHINA OF OVERSEAS CHINESE LIVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE EARLY 1960'S.

8. THE LARGE INFLUX OF CHINESE-AMERICANS INTO THE PRC IN THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS APPARENTLY ALSO RAISED FEARS IN SOME QUARTERS OF DEMORALIZATION AND ESPIONAGE. THIS QUESTION APPARENTLY PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE DEBATES LAST SUMMER OVER SCIENCE AND THE EXCHANGE PROGRAM. THIS ISSUE NOW APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF CONTINUED SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE, BUT THE NUMBER OF OTHER CHINESE-AMERICAN VISITORS MAY WELL DECLINE. IF THE REPORT THAT THE PRC HAS DRASTICALLY CUT DOWN ON THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS IS ACCURATE (HONG KONG 11182), IT WOULD INDICATE A DETERMINATION THAT THE INFLUX POSED TOO GREAT A RISK FOR INTERNAL STABILITY DESPITE ITS OBVIOUS FOREIGN POLICY VALUE.

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